DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 318 003 CS 212 286

TITLE Fiction. Advisory List of Instructional Media.
INSTITUTION North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, Raleigh. Div. of Media Evaluation Service.
PUB DATE Jan 90
NOTE 37p.
PUB TYPE Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescent Literature; Annotated Bibliographies; Childrens Literature; Elementary Secondary Education; *Fiction; Literature Appreciation; *Reading Material Selection; *Recreational Reading
IDENTIFIERS North Carolina

ABSTRACT

This advisory list includes annotations for 88 works of fiction, a list of 105 books favorably reviewed in other reviewing sources, and a directory of publishers mentioned. The list also includes suggested grade levels and the price of each book. (RS)

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ED318003

Media Evaluation Services
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603-1712
January 1990

Advisory List of Instructional Media

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FICTION

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BOOKS

Alexander, Lloyd. THE JEDERA ADVENTURE. 152 p. $12.95. Dutton, 1989. (ISBN 0-525-44481-5) Grades 6-10

In the spring of 1874, Vesper Holly discovers an eight hundred-year-old library book that is fifteen years overdue from the legendary library of Bel-Saaba; obliged to return the volume to uphold her deceased father's honor, the unflappable Vesper and her guardian, Professor Brinton Garrett, set out for North Africa; as in Alexander's previous Vesper Holly adventures, the two travelers surmount a series of obstacles with elan; almost kidnapped and sold into slavery, the pair proceed undaunted across the desert towards their destination where they elude the malevolent Dr. Helvitius, who plans to use them to test his outlandish flying machine; fast pace, vivid and unusual characters, and the courageous, sensitive, and intelligent heroine give this novel a quality touch and readability; with elements of fantasy, an exotic historical setting, and swashbuckling adventure, this novel has wide appeal

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Baker, Barbara. THIRD GRADE IS TERRIBLE. 104 p. $10.95. Dutton, 1989. (ISBN 0-525-44425-4) Grades 2-4

Rash and impulsive Liza is soured on the third grade when she gets transferred from beautiful Mrs. Lane's overcrowded class to stern old Mrs. Rumford's smaller class; Liza's troubles increase as she broods over this injustice, watches her best friend Heather talking to her enemy Monica, and of course gets in deeper with the dreaded Mrs. Rumford by dawdling, talking, daydreaming, and running in the hall; a thoroughly credible, consistent characterization in Liza who never philosophizes or draws deductive conclusions about her unhappiness, yet she is bright and earnest and lovable; readers will both sympathize with and reflect on Liza's stubborn perversity as well as delight in her spunk; Mrs. Rumford is one of those solid, demanding teachers whose worth is felt in after years; excellent drawings of feisty, rebellious Liza and patient, insistent Mrs. Rumford

Baklanov, Grigory. FOREVER NINETEEN. Translated from the Russian by Antonina W. Bouis. 168 p. $13.89. Lippincott, 1989. (ISBN 0-397-32297-6) Grades 8-12

Based on Baklanov's own experiences as a teenager in World War II, this wrenching novel illuminates the misery and hideousness of war, its power both to deaden and to quicken the human spirit; nineteen-year-old Tretyakov has been wounded once and does not last through another battle before being wounded and in the hospital once more; the tenaciousness of the human longing for survival reveals itself in the wounded and maimed men in the hospital, each suffering but each also coping; Tretyakov heals and forges bonds with his hospital mates; he also finds romance but is returned to the front where he is once again wounded and then senselessly killed as he leaves with the first-aid wagon; authentic descriptions of battle and excellent portrayals of character and emotion make this a forceful book, one which shows not the political but the human side of war; these young soldiers hardly know for what they are fighting except their own survival; the agony of waiting families is honestly expressed as are the privations suffered by all; readers should gain much empathy for all who fight in wars and much understanding of the universality of human nature, of the sameness of human feeling and fear whatever the nationality; a stunning tribute to those who died and remain forever young in the dreamscapes of memory

Banks, Lynne Reid. MELUSINE: A MYSTERY. 248 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-020395-1) Grades 8-12

A British family vacationing in a decaying French chateau discovers mystery in the chateau, in the daughter (Melusine Serpe) of its fierce and unnatural owner, and in an unexplained coffin in its tower; young Roger befriends Melusine and soon suspects that she is being sexually abused by her father; several incidents also convince him that Melusine can change herself into a snake to get away from her father; when Roger and his father find their way into the forbidden tower, they discover a coffin; M. Serpe discovers them; but the shot he fires misses thanks to Melusine, who in her snake form causes him to fall to his death; Roger later finds Melusine's discarded snake skin and then Melusine herself, whose own skin and face suddenly appear more human and less snakelike; at the end of the novel Melusine is trying to bring

beauty back into her living space in the chateau, leaving behind both the literal squalor in which she lived with her father and the emotional squalor he created in her life; although one must to some extent suspend disbelief to fully enjoy this novel, those who can will find it gripping and difficult to put down

Bawden, Nina. THE OUTSIDE CHILD. 232 p. $12.95. Lothrop, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-08965-8) Grades 6-8

Fetching story of an "outside" child, Jane Tucker, and her discovery of her father's additional family living in London, the offspring of his second wife who had rejected two-year-old Jane years earlier after Jane's mother's death had cleared the way for the domineering beauty to capture the grieving widower; many turns of plot later, Jane and her half-brothers and half-sister are united briefly; charm of book lies in Bawden's unfailing wit and style, her characterizations of Jane's eccentric aunts who raise the girl, and her sensitive interpretation of Plato Jones, Jane's friend and co-conspirator in ferreting out the "other" Tuckers in London; no happy-ending nonsense but a good, solid resolution which rounds out realistic and reassuring identity search sure to appeal to children of divorce/remarriage as well as to stepchildren

Bojunga-Nunes, Lygia. THE COMPANIONS. Translated from the Portugese by Ellen Watson. 58 p. $11.95. Farrar, 1989. (ISBN 0-374-31465-9) Grades 2-3

Delightfully off-beat story of a bear, a rabbit, and a dog who're "on the lam," so to speak, from human silliness and exploitation; they become a threesome when Crystal-Voice, a "bearissimus" ("because he was an enormous bear"), Stony, an unsmiling rabbit, and Fleur, a dog forced to wear bracelets and perfume, unite in a vagabond existence away from zoos, indifferent people, and foolish rich women; dependence on each other and inventiveness for rescuing each other from ever-present human predators are themes carried out in amusing but thought-provoking episodes; should discourage idea of caging animals, ignoring wildlife, and dressing up pets; fun drawings

Byars, Betsy. BINGO BROWN AND THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE. 132 p. $11.95. Viking, 1989. (ISBN 0-670-82791-6) Grades 4-8

Lovable Bingo is at it again, this time worrying his way through summer vacation while his girlfriend Melissa, miles away in Oklahoma, writes him longing letters, his pesky next door neighbor Billy Wentworth dumps a poodle on Bingo to dogsit, and Bingo's parents quarrel to the point of an angry exit by his mom; as Bingo wrestles with the why's and wherefore's of these "burning questions," his characteristic wit, winsomeness, and well-meaning bungling help resolve all issues, from what to do about a long-distance girlfriend to luring his mom back home--she's pregnant and furious; fun reading with all the identifiable Bingo Brown quirks and wackiness in full gear for both his fans and new converts

Calvert, Patricia. WHEN MORNING COMES. 153 p. $12.95. Scribner, 1989. (ISBN 0-684-19105-9) Grades 8-12

Incorrigible Cat Kinkaid, professional street kid at fifteen, has an immature and unavailable mother and a soldier father who was killed in Vietnam; her tough and predatory demeanor hides the pain and insecurity of longing for

love and a real family life; a last-chance foster placement with lackluster Annie Bowen at the Sweetberry Bee Farm is doomed to fail unless Cat rechannels her survival skills towards her own growth and change; an old dog provides companionship and unconditional affection; wholesome, square-dancing Hooter Lewis offers a new kind of male friendship; after a harrowing return to the streets, Cat faces Annie's comfortable world with clearer vision and commitment; satisfying story of conflicting values and a disadvantaged girl ultimately brave enough to accept help and turn her life around; good reading for young adults from dysfunctional families or for most teens involved in self-awareness and change

Carter, Alden R. UP COUNTRY. 256 p. $14.95. Putnam, 1989.
(ISBN 0-399-21583-2) Grades 8-12

Sixteen-year-old Carl Staggers, the first-person narrator of this fine novel, has a real gift for electronics; unfortunately, he uses his talent to repair stolen stereos in an effort to make enough money to go to college and study engineering--and more importantly, to get away from his promiscuous, alcoholic mother; when his mother is arrested for a hit-and-run accident and sent to a rehabilitation center, Carl must go live with an aunt, uncle, and cousin he hardly knows; moving from the city to the country is also a trauma, but nothing compared to the trial of facing his own true emotions away from the fantasy life he had created as he tried to survive in an alcoholic household; Carl becomes close to people for the first time in his life: his cousin Bob and the girl he comes to love, Signa; after a while Carl's involvement with the thievery ring is discovered, and he nearly gives up hope for his life; his punishment does not include incarceration, however, and he is allowed to return to his mother, who has begun what appears to be a true recovery from her disease; although Carl wants to help his mother, he also realizes that his own recovery will not happen if he has to live with the constant fear of her relapse; he chooses to return to his uncle's family, where he has found what he has never had: unconditional love and support, nurturance, responsibilities appropriate for his age, security, and a sense of belonging; readers will respond to the strong, realistic characterizations of both adults and adolescents as well as to the humor and the wonderful dialogue; offers no easy answers or false promises about the personality problems created by growing up with an alcoholic parent but does convey the truth that people can and do change; a first choice for library shelves, of special value to children of alcoholics

Christopher, Matt. THE HIT-AWAY KID. 60 p. $9.95. Little, 1988.
(ISBN 0-316-13995-5) Grades 3-5

A lot of action in baseball-centered story of Barry McGee, a left fielder and hit-away batter, who learns a difficult lesson about cheating at sports; Barry sees himself as, well, bending the rules a little, not breaking them, when Coach Parker angrily calls him down for ignoring signals and, more seriously, kids on the opposing team start to razz him for slyly covering up a dropped ball; not until his sister and baby brother are drawn into the feud does Barry have second thoughts, aided by his chief accuser Alec; well-paced and authentic sports story with believable characters, dialogue, and motivation; readers are reminded of basic wisdom of fair play; above-average pen-and-ink drawings

Cole, Brock. CELINE. 216 p. $12.95. Farrar, 1989. (ISBN 0-374-31234-6) Grades 7-12

An excellent novel about a sixteen-year-old girl living with a stepmother who is twenty-two; her mother cannot settle down to take care of her, her grandmother can no longer put up with her creative personality, and her father has gone to Europe on a lecture tour; Celine, an artist, acquires a seven-year-old friend, Jake, by default, and the two share the puzzles and pain of separation and divorce; Celine is unusually alive, a unique and intelligent observer of adult behavior, an astute if slightly confused analyst of her own motivations and actions; through various awkward (and sometimes quite funny) circumstances--for instance, Jake's father's affair with Celine's art teacher, her stepmother's fleeting attraction to a priggish professor, and a ridiculous party where canapes are being made of cat food--Celine explores the myriad tracks of human thought and feeling and the pain imposed on children by adults who cannot find a center for their own lives and leave their children to sort through the chaos; a truly fine novel from the author of the superb The Goats, a book that weaves humor and strands of hope through an honest tapestry of emotional life

Conford, Ellen. A CASE FOR JENNY ARCHER. (Springboard Books) 61 p. $9.70. Little, 1988. (ISBN 0-316-15266-8) Grades 2-4

Catching professional thieves is the game in this Jenny Archer adventure inspired by Jenny's reading of detective stories featuring a girl sleuth; Jenny's blunders and screwy second guessing regarding new neighbors across the street discredit her with both her parents and her babysitter, Mrs. Butterfield, who scoff at Jenny's suspicion that things aren't as they should be during the moving in of the Moore family; young readers will enjoy Jenny's eventual triumph, ably assisted by pal Wilson Wynn and faithful pooch Barkley; black-and-white illustrations

Conford, Ellen. JENNY ARCHER, AUTHOR. (Springboard Books) 61 p. $9.70. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-15255-2) Grades 2-4

A case of misunderstanding the teacher's directions as Jenny Archer, instructed to write her "life story" (autobiography), puts the emphasis on "story" and angers Mrs. Pike with a wild and woolly tale which literally begins with "I was born on a dark and stormy night"; like so many beginning writers, Jenny thinks that what she herself knows about and feels is hardly worth telling, and so she invents facts and truths rather than probing and presenting the real ones; excellent writing lesson in the guise of fiction and a fanciful heroine will appeal to young readers/writers; Mrs. Pike's apology for overreacting is a nice touch as all ends well--and truthfully; attractive pen-and-ink illustrations

Conford, Ellen. WHAT'S COOKING, JENNY ARCHER? (Springboard Books) 69 p. $9.70. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-15254-4) Grades 2-4

What a wacky introduction to money-making projects for the younger set in this lighthearted romp through Jenny Archer's kitchen attempts at making and selling lunches to her school pals; appealing misadventure involving Jenny, her hungry dog Barkley, and numerous sandwich and cookie disasters; some excellent alternatives to peanut butter and jelly, however, find their way into Jenny's imaginative lunch bag project, and kids who hate cafeteria fare

will both laugh and sympathize as Jenny strives to please Beth, who's allergic to shellfish, and Wilson, who loves shrimp salad, all the while figuring her costs against her profits; pleasant and diverting lesson in practical math skills; soft, charcoal-like illustrations

Conrad, Pam. MY DANIEL. 137 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-021314-0) Grades 5-8

The story of twelve-year-old Julia Creath, her brother, Daniel, and their dinosaur as told in flashbacks by eighty-year-old Julia Creath Summerwaithe to her grandchildren, Ellie and Stevie; Julia has traveled to New York City to visit her son and his children but mainly to go to the museum to see the dinosaur bones that her brother discovered; Julia and Daniel have a special closeness, and his death at age sixteen leaves her with a lifelong feeling of emptiness; through telling--and reliving--her story, by touching the dinosaur bones, she becomes reconnected with the child that she was and with Daniel; the past and the present merge as she shares her old secrets with her grandchildren and as she recaptures the excitement and passion of her youth; a tender book with enough excitement (an evil dinosaur hunter with a camel, for instance) to keep readers interested as they learn something about the intimacy created by shared memories and the staying power of love

Crofford, Emily. HEALING WARRIOR: A STORY ABOUT SISTER ELIZABETH KENNY. 64 p. $9.95. Carolrhoda Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-87614-382-6) Grades 2-5

Fictionalized account of Australian nurse who developed radical new method of treating infantile paralysis, earning world acclaim after years of suspicion and denunciation from world medical establishment; follows Kenny's self-taught and experimental efforts with patients, namely her use of physical therapy rather than casts and splints in treating afflicted muscles; honestly portrays Nurse Kenny's difficult plight in male-oriented profession which questioned audacity of self-trained female to advise authorities; excellent title for fostering interest in heretofore one-sex professions and especially for encouraging intelligent observation and inventiveness as practical problem-solving ingredients, reducing the rather silly and exalted mystique clinging to medical profession; black-and-white drawings; list of sources

Danziger, Paula. EVERYONE ELSE'S PARENTS SAID YES. 115 p. $13.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29805-6) Grades 4-6

Humorous chronicle of Matthew Martin's sleepover birthday party and the five days that precede it; portrays family, friends, and school from the sixth grade perspective; eleven-year-old Matthew--computer whiz, terrible speller, and practical joker par excellence--finds the tables turned when he becomes the target of revenge for a group of girls; the class feud culminates in the picketing of Matthew's sleepover; with support from his parents, Matthew resolves the crisis, has the first boy-girl party in his class, and discovers that girls are people, too; entertaining sidelines include Matthew's running bickers and banters with his thirteen-year-old sister Amanda, unlucky enough to have her first date on the night of the sleepover, and his mother's unwavering allegiance to health foods (and yucky lunches); includes facsimiles of Matthew's computer creations, the girls' signed agreement, and pictures of picket signs; will appeal especially to boys and computer enthusiasts

Davidson, Alan. THE BEWITCHING OF ALISON ALLBRIGHT. 156 p. $11.95. Viking, 1989. (ISBN 0-670-82015-6) Grades 5-10

Engrossing British tale of teenaged Alison Allbright, a pretty but bitter, lonely girl who hates her dull life, her family background, and her hardworking but socially unacceptable parents and brother; ashamed of her home and resentful of both her parents'stoic acceptance of their lot and her brother's studious determination to earn a place in one of England's great universities as a way out of bleak working class, Alison broods sullenly until one day Mrs. Considine, wealthy, elegant, and with all the right connections, enters her life like a fairy godmother and turns Alison's whole world around; utterly absorbing story of a selfish, thoughtless girl who gets what she's always yearned for--only to discover that she has, in the bargain, quite literally given away herself; readers will identify with Alison's daydreams come true and shiver as the sinister Mrs. Considine gradually reveals her mad design to replace her own dead daughter with a look-alike; a rather contrived ending and the cynical, snobbish indifference Alison displays toward her family make one uneasy, but the fine descriptive details, the evocation of two powerful characters, and the suspense will enthrall readers eager to see the scales fall from Alison's eyes

DeFelice, Cynthia C. THE STRANGE NIGHT WRITING OF JESSAMINE COULTER. 51 p. $11.95. Macmillan, 1988. (ISBN 0-02-726451-3) Grades 7-12

Old-fashioned storytelling ingredients of magic, warm characters, rustic setting, and a mentor who inspires and "saves" a promising youth combine in tale of Jessie Coulter, calligrapher who discovers her pen's power to predict the future; as Jessie's pen guides her hand, the elderly widow finds herself recording next week's menu for Jake's Place, a death notice for Rufus McDonald, and the disappointing certificate awarding a scholarship to the rival of her own apprentice, Callie Williams--events yet to occur; lovely little mini-epic of sorts in which Jessie turns her strange power to good, using her advance knowledge to aid those affected to reorder their priorities and prepare themselves for their fates; a long short story, in effect, with appeal for a special audience who enjoys myth in modern settings

Diggs, Lucy. SELENE GOES HOME. 55 p. $11.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31464-7) Grades 1-3

The misadventures of Selene, a pretty little cat who decides that life on a houseboat cannot be so nice as life in a house and arranges to return to her mistress's former home; Selene finds out, alas, that "you can't go home again," and her various efforts to return to the houseboat are enlivened along the way by a stray calico cat and a sea gull; lovely, lyrical writing and charming pen-and-ink drawings of Selene herself, who combines feline haughtiness and adorableness in exactly the right proportions; a good read-aloud selection

Dillon, Barbara. MRS. TOOEY AND THE TERRIBLE TOXIC TAR. 88 p. $10.89. Lippincott, 1988. (ISBN 0-397-32277-1) Grades 3-6

When their parents leave on a sales award trip, Craig and Margo are the only children left in Summerton during their school's spring break, a dismal fact made worse by the arrival of their babysitter, a "loony-tune little old lady" named Mrs. Tooey; spirits pick up in a hurry, however, as Mrs. Tooey reveals herself to be a witch with a mission--saving Summerton from her sister Velma,

also a witch, who is determined to destroy the whole place with toxic tar in revenge for condos being built on her favorite grounds for gathering nightshade, henbane, and other essential herbs, as well as for the conversion of her favorite old mansion into a senior citizens' center; Craig, Margo, and the delightful Mrs. Tooey join forces against Velma in a story full of witch lore and characters, not the least of whom is Zig the cat; a first-rate Halloween week read-aloud

Dines, Carol. BEST FRIENDS TELL THE BEST LIES. 213 p. $14.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29704-1) Grades 7-12

Fourteen-year-old Leah, the novel's narrator, is rather in awe of and mystified by her friend Tamara; Tamara's and Leah's mothers are both divorced; among the many lies that Tamara tells is a wild story about her mother being a murderer; Leah objects to her mother's interest in a man Leah believes is not physically appealing; when Leah falls for the man's nephew, however, she begins to see Jose in a different light; the girls' mothers have their own problems: Leah's is afraid of making a commitment, and Tamara's is so desperate to be in a relationship that she is emotionally neglectful of her children; Tamara runs away to be with her father, who does not want her; when she returns she tries to resume her relationship with Leah, but her jealousy of Leah and Miguel brings out the same old Tamara--lies and spitefulness; Miguel also disappoints Leah by deciding that he is not ready for any sort of emotional commitment; ultimately Leah looks to herself rather than others for the strength and serenity she needs to cope with her life; excellent characterizations and a well-paced plot distinguish this novel; an excellent book for almost all readers, one that is both entertaining and deeply perceptive

Etra, Jonathan, and Stephanie Spinner. ALIENS FOR BREAKFAST. 62 p. $5.99. Random Sch. Div., 1988. (ISBN 0-394-92097-7) Grades 2-5

Dranes--bad guys from outer space--are invading Earth, but Richard Bickerstaff and friendly Aric, a freeze-dried alien beamed from the planet Ganoob in a cereal box, are fighting back; with only five days to save the world, Richard and Aric finally figure out the necessary secret weapon (which freeze-drying has temporarily erased from Aric's memory) and zap the deadly Drane masquerading as a classy new kid in Richard's school; fun for sci-fi fans in a solid plot, good suspense, and great boy/alien teamwork; appealing comic book-style drawings

Facklam, Margery. THE TROUBLE WITH MOTHERS. 135 p. $13.95. Clarion Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-89919-773-6) Grades 5-8

Luke, the narrator of this amusing book about a serious topic, does battle with the proponents of censorship over his mother's book, The Passionate Pirate; Major Madison, the author of The Cleaning of America, rouses the townspeople to get rid of any book that might tarnish the minds of young people; as might be expected, his judgment is conservative if not reactionary, so the very title of Mrs. Troy's book incites him to indignation; Luke and his family must deal with rude remarks (even from friends), ugly phone calls, and protesters on their lawn before the real confrontation in a rally where people start throwing books and videos into a fire; Luke's grandmother gets arrested for hitting Major Madison during the fracas that ensues; the trouble with mothers, then, works both ways: Luke's

problem with his mother's book and his mother's problem with his grandmother's eager defense of her daughter; Luke's anger at his mother subsides when he reads the book and understands that it is actually a historical novel about the capturing of slaves and not at all passionate in the sexual sense; the point here, of course, is that censorship frequently results from ignorance of the material and that any passage read out of context is not a true representation of a book's content or meaning; young readers will identify with the situation of being embarrassed by a parent and will enjoy the realistic voice of Luke

Ferris, Jean. LOOKING FOR HOME. 167 p. $12.95. Farrar, 1989. (ISBN 0-374-34649-6) Grades 8-12

College savings are Daphne Blake's ticket to freedom from an abusive father who terrorizes her submissive mother and four younger brothers, but romance and poor judgment on prom night dash these plans because the seventeen-year-old becomes pregnant; deciding against an abortion, Daphne takes her money and runs to a larger city where she lands a job as a waitress at the Gourmaniac restaurant, a life's dream come true for T. Peter, a former doctor; befriended by the jovial restaurateur, the energetic cook Junior Lee, and the eccentric artist Mattie, Daphne finds love and support in an offbeat new "family"; somewhat predictably, she keeps the baby and starts college; although the challenges of most teen pregnancies are not met so successfully, this novel presents a convincing and resourceful heroine, wise and distinctive characters, and lessons about real family spirit and moving past our mistakes

Fine, Anne. MY WAR WITH GOGGLE-EYES. 166 p. $13.45. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-28314-2) Grades 5-8

Kitty narrates her struggle to overwhelm with antagonism and then finally to accept with respect her mother's dull but dependable boyfriend; she tells her story to Helen, a classmate who has run out of the room in tears because of a similar situation; as they hide out in a closet, Kitty explains her initial response to Gerald (or Goggle-eyes as she calls him) and his continuing efforts to gain the approval of Kitty and her younger sister, Jude (who likes him from the start); Gerald accompanies the family on a nuclear protest demonstration even though he disagrees with Kitty's mother's stand on this issue; ultimately Kitty comes to feel both respect and affection towards Gerald, and it is Kitty who insists that her mother invite Gerald back to their home after the adults have a serious argument; a good novel that holds readers with its humor, pacing, lively dialogue, and satisfying characterizations; deals sensitively with a situation faced by many children but is never preachy or simplistic; effectively explores the basic need for tolerance and commitment in successful human relationships; a delightful first-choice selection for library collections

Gallo, Donald R., ed. CONNECTIONS: SHORT STORIES BY OUTSTANDING WRITERS FOR YOUNG ADULTS. 226 p. $14.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29815-3) Grades 7-12

An excellent collection of seventeen stories centering around the general theme of human connections, in most cases romantic ones, and grouped into the subthemes of "Encounters," "Clashes," "Surprises," and "Insights"; contributing authors include M. E. Kerr, Richard Peck, Todd Strasser, Alden

R. Carter, Susan Beth Pfeffer, Chris Crutcher, Gordon Korman, and Sue Ellen Bridgers; stories range from funny to serious, and each manages to be both enlightening and entertaining; "Dear Marsha," for instance, contains letters between high school pen pals--one of whom, however, turns out to be sixty-one years old and the principal of her school; this story not only provides an interesting twist but also shows that age differences do not automatically construct barriers between people, that compassion and empathy--not similarity of age--make the real connections; "A Reasonable Sum" offers a hilarious and emotionally accurate description of a first day at high school, "As It Is With Strangers" deals with the break in connection between a mother and daughter because of an experience not shared by both, "Mildred" reveals the bonds of respect and love that can exist even in a difficult family relationship, "Fairy Tale" gently offers release from the notion that physical perfection is the most important trait to seek in a romantic partner, and "Sunny Days and Sunny Nights" plays out the ever hopeful human longing for a relationship in which two healthy people are true both to themselves and to each other; a brief biography and discussion of other works by the author follow each story; a first-choice selection that should spark some interest even in reluctant readers

Garfield, Leon. YOUNG NICK AND JUBILEE. 134 p. $13.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29777-7) Grades 5-9

Galloping adventure through the rough streets and city parks of 18th-century London with Young Nick (to distinguish him from Old Nick--the devil) and his little sister Jubilee ("on account of the Pope having done something wonderful in the year she was born"); typical Garfield tale, spun with charm and music, almost poetry more than prose; Nick and Jubilee, Irish children whose parents have either died or abandoned them, exhibit typical Garfield spunk, surviving by their wits, evading "bluebottles" (police), teaming up with delightful Old Parrot Face--a professional thief--and generally escaping arrest or abuse by clever and innocently illegal means; full-page illustrations, depicting clean and proper interpretations of characters, strike only incompatible note, given seedy, impoverished London of children's escapades; a book for readers who love words and verbal pictures

Gondosch, Linda. THE MONSTERS OF MARBLE AVENUE. 60 p. $9.70. Little, 1988. (ISBN 0-316-31991-0) Grades 2-5

Mayhem reigns as Luke, Annie, Melissa, and Sam try desperately to make puppets for a promised puppet show after Luke discovers that his mom mistakenly sold all his puppets in a garage sale; fights between boys and girls, a troublesome baby sister, a mischievous dog, and a disastrous crushing by Dad's car wheels seem to seal the poor puppet venture's fate, but the kids prevail, offering young readers laughs and fast, fun reading as they resolve one problem after another; lots of tips on making puppets and staging shows; black-and-white drawings

Grant, Cynthia D. PHOENIX RISING: OR HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR LIFE. 148 p. $12.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31458-2) Grades 8-12

The death of eighteen-year-old Helen from cancer has shattered her family and left her seventeen-year-old sister, Jessie, the victim of frightening dreams, panic attacks, and depression; Jessie's older brother, Lucas, and her father argue almost constantly, and Jessie's increasing withdrawal from life deeply

alarms her grieving mother; the stages of Jessie's grief are realistically drawn; the healing of that grief is aided by Helen's diary, which Jessie discovers and which readers follow in alternate chapters of the book; Helen's feelings about her disease and her life help Jessie release and understand her own; without being preachy or falsely sentimental, the book shows how hope can battle despair, how the permanent effects of loss can be endured, and how those who touch our hearts remain not only a part of our memory but also of the character of our existence; insightful, empathetic depiction of grief and depression; may be especially meaningful to young people dealing with serious loss of any kind; a fine selection for library shelves

Green, Connie Jordan. THE WAR AT HOME. 136 p. $12.95. McElderry Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-689-50470-5) Grades 5-8

Lovely, old-fashioned story of a bygone time in the growing-up year of 1945 for young Mattie McDowell, a Kentucky transplant at the brink of adolescence in the raw, wartime city of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where her father works on the secret bomb project: when cousin Virgil, chauvinistic and generally disagreeable--after all, he's a boy--moves in, Mattie's patience is tried until gradually her parentless cousin shows his mettle in a number of winning ways; book's charm lies in the perfect evocation of mountain folks, their rituals, their humor, the lovely setting and end-of-an-era nostalgia unsentimentally stirred by scents, scenes, laconic dialect, and simple, earthy strength of Appalachian natives

Greene, Carol. THE JENNY SUMMER. 76 p. $11.89. Har-Row, 1988. (ISBN 0-06-022209-3) Grades 2-4

The story of Robin Hill who wants a best friend and something fun and exciting to write about in her diary; when Robin discovers Melissa reading her diary, she feels angry and betrayed so that when Jenny moves in next door, Robin is delighted to replace Melissa with the wonderfully compatible--and trust-worthy--Jenny; Robin's summer days with Jenny are spiced by gentle humor in the deft characterizations of her parents and her grandmother, all of whom help Robin come to terms with Jenny's sudden moving away and the reappearance of a contrite Melissa; fine drawings in black and white, one per chapter; just the right selection for readers past picture books and anxious to read chaptered stories

Greenwald, Sheila. ROSY'S ROMANCE. 106 p. $12.45. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-32704-2) Grades 3-6

Lighthearted take-off on serial romances pits Rosy Cole and her amiable sidekick, Hermione Wong, against the odds of bringing to life the slick, perfect-ending plots of their favorite formula novels; all sorts of real-life snags and unpredictable humanity thwart Rosy and Hermione's "Project Romance," giving the lie to their bibles--numbered romances with titles like Perfect Love and Prom Time; an amusing argument against junk reads, jazzed up with sly pen-and-ink drawings on nearly every page

Greenwald, Sheila. WRITE ON, ROSY! 96 p. $12.45. Little, 1988. (ISBN 0-316-32705-0) Grades 3-6

Another carefully laid plan goes astray for the inimitable Rosy Cole, this time as investigative reporter stalking Dr. Gormley, headmistress of

all-girls' school attended by Rosy and her constant companion, Hermione Wong; Rosy's class assignment for Young Authors project leads her into tracking Dr. Gormley after school and on weekends, drawing all the wrong conclusions while heeding all the journalist's rules: observe, take notes, ask questions, assess, analyze, etc.; fun and learning combine as young readers follow Rosy step by step through a writing project, laughing at her blunders while absorbing good writing principles subtly reinforced; pen-and-ink drawings greatly extend story, adding valuable information unexpressed in text

Hall, Lynn. DAGMAR SCHULTZ AND THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. 74 p. $11.95. Scribner, 1989. (ISBN 0-684-19037-0) Grades 5-8

Fast-reading, wisecracking narrative spun by the delightful and irrepressible Dagmar Schultz, a kind of pubescent cross between Garrison Keillor and Holden Caulfield (in a good mood), whose urgent desire is to dazzle and smite James Mann, at 13 one year older than Dagmar; to such ends, she makes a deal with Edgar, a self-proclaimed warlock who is hopelessly in love with Dagmar's hearty, bowling champ Aunt Gretchen; when Aunt Gretchen grudgingly agrees to go out with Edgar and Edgar casts a spell on James Mann, things get wildly out of hand--Dagmar suffers the constant attention of James's hopeless little brother, the result of a misfired love spell ("Sometimes at that distance the aim isn't real accurate," says Edgar), and Edgar lands in the hospital with three cracked ribs, the result of Aunt Gretchen's enthusiastic hug; funny, full of one-liners; escape reading

Hest, Amy. WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE PERFECT FAMILY? 96 p. $12.95. Clarion Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-89919-659-4) Grades 4-6

Stylish little story of Cornie Blume, 11-year-old daughter of divorced parents, who divides her time between her bohemian mother's Broadway apartment and her lawyer father's Upper East Side place, complete with his second wife Jane, a lawyer, and their new little bundle of joy, Amanda; the stresses and heartaches of a "dethroned" child give way to sisterly adoration as baby Amanda steals Cornie's heart; wonderful cityscape emerges in Cornie's adventures at both apartments, at school, in her mom's boutique, on the sidewalks with her pal Megan; realistic, "uptown" kind of story--Dad prepares omelets to Vivaldi strings on apartment stereo--which never loses touch with vulnerable, goodhumored young Cornie as she learns that there are some wonderful people, if not "perfect families," who love her very much

Holland, Isabelle. THE UNFRIGHTENED DARK. 121 p. $13.45. Little, 1990. (ISBN 0-316-37173-4) Grades 7-12

Suspense story featuring blind teenager's plight when animal rights activists "rescue" her guide dog whom she has "imprisoned" in her handicap; with aid of good friends, including a romantic interest, Jocelyn's dilemma is resolved, her golden retriever recovered, and animal-snatching ring brought to justice; fast-paced, smoothly flowing narrative with believable heroine and much information on needs and pride of blind persons in our society; ending a little too facile, perhaps even confusing, but plot and psychology of characters so skillfully handled as to offset weak conclusion

Hooks, William H. PIONEER CAT. 63 p. $5.99. Random Sch. Div., 1988. (ISBN 0-394-92038-4) Grades 2-5

Fine tale of nine-year-old Kate Purdy, a pioneer girl, who smuggles a cat into her covered wagon and onto the Oregon Trail; Snuggs the cat survives many perils, including a buffalo stampede, an Indian challenge, a river crossing, even delivering four kittens on the trail; a story with drama and excitement, all kinds of interesting tidbits about wagon train life, and delightful characters in Kate and her redoubtable friend Rosie; the stowaway cat is a unifying ingredient in an exceptionally strong, panoramic narrative; black-and-white drawings

Hudson, Jan. SWEETGRASS. 159 p. $13.95. Philomel Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-399-21721-5) Grades 8-12

Fifteen-year-old Sweetgrass, a nineteenth century Blackfoot Indian living in western Canada, narrates this coming-of-age novel; Sweetgrass feels that she is old enough to marry, but her father insists that she is not yet a woman even though girls younger than she are already married; anxious to marry a young warrior named Eagle-Sun, she works hard to prove her maturity; she shows her courage during a raid, but it is not until she helps her family through a terrible winter of hunger and smallpox that her father acknowledges her as a grown woman; with her father gone hunting for food, Sweetgrass nurses the rest of her family through smallpox; the two youngest die; determined that her brother and her almost-mother will not die, she catches and feeds them fish, a taboo in the Blackfoot tribe; but they survive, and her father, who returns after a battle with smallpox himself, justly recognizes his daughter's strength, ingenuity, and persistence; this historical picture of Indian life is well written and researched as well as captivating; a worthy book not only because of its contribution to our knowledge of Indian life but also because of its wisdom about what maturity really is--not just a number of years but the ability to accept life's challenges, both large and small, and move with and through them; includes a bibliography

Hurwitz, Johanna. RUSSELL AND ELISA. 88 p. $11.88. Morrow, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-08793-0) Grades K-3

Invincible, rip-roaring Russell and his almost four-year-old sister Elisa romp through the hazardous, humorous, and familiar landscape of early childhood in five related vignettes that illustrate both the warmth and the inevitable rough edges of sibling interactions; opening story focuses on Elisa's fascination with the postal process and her receipt of a special handmade rag doll that she names Airmail; Elisa's affection for the doll and Russell's disdain of it unify the stories; other episodes feature hair-raising home experiments following a trip to the barber, a hard night for Elisa (who falls asleep under the table at her parents' dinner party), second grader Russell's first sleepover, a family outing to a suddenly exciting baseball game, and a lost doll crisis when Airmail is left at the library; Russell exhibits the arrogance and peskiness often typical of older siblings but also pays the consequences for some of his mischief and responds to burgeoning pangs of conscience; illustrated with Lillian Hoban's appealing pencil drawings; excellent for book talks or reading aloud as well as independent reading

Jones, Rebecca C. THE BELIEVERS. 176 p. $13.45. Arcade Pub. Inc., 1989. (ISBN 1-55970-035-1) (Available from Little) Grades 5-8

Sixth grader Tibby Taylor, adopted by a television reporter (Veronica Taylor), longs for her single mother to be home with her more; her mother's ambitions leave Tibby largely in the care of Veronica's Aunt Evelyn, and Tibby develops a sassy, flippant manner at school and at home to cover up her loneliness for her mother; when she meets a family that is a member of a religious sect, she is drawn to the warmth and closeness she sees there; she attends many of the sect's services and is increasingly drawn to the idea that if she prays long and hard enough, her mother will come home to stay; the fanaticism of the sect finally reveals itself to Tibby, and she becomes involved in a life-or-death situation that also forces her to choose between a young girl's life and one of Veronica's stories; because she has slowly come to learn the limits of Veronica's commitment to her and the real value of Aunt Evelyn's constant care, Tibby is able to make the right decision in human terms: the life of the girl over her mother's approval; excellent characterizations and sensitivity to the feelings of children are the special strengths of this book; a well-written, captivating book that should have wide appeal

Kehret, Peg. NIGHTMARE MOUNTAIN. 164 p. $13.95. Dutton, 1989. (ISBN 0-525-65008-3) Grades 5-8

Suspense featuring 12-year-old Molly, a spunky child of divorced parents, who finds herself thrust into a life-and-death crisis on her aunt and uncle's llama ranch in Washington almost as soon as she arrives for a visit; Molly's cousin Glendon, exactly her age, displays open hostility toward her immediately upon meeting her, and her aunt falls into a coma which seems to have been induced by poisoning; the plot develops swiftly into a case of llama-rustling by an evil uncle, whose mistreatment of young Glendon explains the boy's neurosis, and Molly, thrown back upon her own considerable survival instincts, soon enlists Glendon to help her protect the llamas, themselves, and the interests of her temporarily absent aunt and uncle in a drama of escape climaxed by an avalanche; the nefarious uncle gets his just desserts, Glendon and Molly are united, and Aunt Karen's "poisoning" turns out to be a severe allergic reaction; fine, fast mystery

Kerr, M.E. FELL BACK. 181 p. $11.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-023293-5) Grades 10-12

Is it murder or suicide when Paul Lasher plunges to his death from a tower at an exclusive prep school? John Fell--amateur sleuth and teenage gourmet--is drawn into the dilemma; his tuition paid by an unknown benefactor, Fell belongs to the school's "Secret Seven" club and also takes on an assignment to steer the daughter of a prominent alumnus away from an undesirable romance; Fell's two missions come together in a twisted plot that involves grudges and revenge in a secret society, family secrets, and ultimately the FBI and high-level cocaine trafficking; Fell is intelligent, has said "no" to drugs, and pits his own sensibilities against the world and values of the very rich; novel offers realistic dialogue, an appealing main character, and credible portrayal of surface relationships among friends and family and between males and females; plot becomes a bit too intricate and neatly wrapped up at the end; will appeal especially to readers who enjoyed Kerr's earlier Fell and to students who like boarding school tales or mysteries

Kherdian, David. A SONG FOR UNCLE HARRY. 76 p. $13.95. Philomel Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-399-21895-5) Grades 4-8

Quaint and reflective story of Petey, growing up in American Midwest of 1930s as a child of Armenian parents and devoted nephew of Uncle Harry, an Original whose Armenian ways and unique personality profoundly shape Petey; a book for a special sort of reader who will enjoy the difference and flavor of ethnic elements too often overlooked in our "melting pot"; Uncle Harry's special relationship with Petey is celebrated in memorable '30s scenes of the two gathering dandelion leaves from lawns of metropolitan office buildings, roasting chestnuts collected from all over, riding together in Uncle Harry's Model A Ford to fishing holes outside the city, and mostly ambling together through the Armenian section of the city with Uncle Harry dispensing earthy, Old Country wisdom for his receptive, adoring young nephew; quiet, nostalgic reading; drawings by Nonny Hogrogian catch the period and people in austere black and white while suggesting the growing up going on inside Petey as he observes and contrasts his flamboyant uncle with his sober-minded, taciturn parents

Kline, Suzy. HERBIE JONES AND HAMBURGER HEAD. 111 p. $13.95. Putnam, 1989. (ISBN 0-399-21748-7) Grades 2-5

Another goofy Herbie Jones adventure, this time featuring Herbie's rescue of a bank robber's dog after Herbie and the dog unwittingly foil the robber's bank holdup; all sorts of grade school appeal--girls vs. boys, a pet show parade, mayhem in a fancy restaurant, dog poop for Dad to step in, funny one-liners abounding; Hamburger Head, the dog, may be the sanest character; fine black-and-white drawings

Kline, Suzy. HERBIE JONES AND THE MONSTER BALL. 126 p. $12.95. Putnam, 1988. (ISBN 0-399-21569-7) Grades 2-5

Herbie, being absolutely no budding Babe Ruth, finds that his troubles double when his Uncle Dwight, star baseball player, arrives in town and gets the big idea of a baseball team for the boys; Raymond Martin, faithful friend, joins Herbie's disastrous outings on the diamond, and Annabelle Louisa Hodgekiss makes her disdainful appearances, sniffing scornfully at the dumbness of males; full-page black-and-white illustrations depict a handsome Uncle Dwight and the usual Herbie/Raymond antics

Kline, Suzy. HORRIBLE HARRY AND THE GREEN SLIME. 58 p. $9.95. Viking, 1989. (ISBN 0-670-82468-2) Grades 2-4

Four stories of the life and times of Room 2B at South School where Doug, Harry, Song Lee, and gang have fun with their creative young teacher, Miss Mackle; their reading of Charlotte's Web launches the Invasion of the (paper) Cobwebs, a Secret Pals project seals Doug and Harry's friendship, and a Demonstration Day gives Doug the wonderful, unexpected opportunity to spike the school principal's hair--Mr. Cardini had innocently volunteered; amusing pen-and-ink drawings; a witty, sensitive text just right for all younger readers

Kwitz, Mary DeBall. SHADOW OVER MOUSEHAVEN MANOR. 160 p. $10.95. Scholastic Inc., 1989. (ISBN 0-590-42034-8) Grades 3-5

A valiant mouse niece rescues her aunt, held hostage and bound in basement of Mousehaven Manor, and rids the manor and Mousedale of a gang of Chicago rats led by evil Magnus Rat; with aid of animal companions, Minabell Mouse makes the dangerous journey down Rodent Run to Mousehaven Manor after she receives a bogus telegram saying that Aunt Pitty Pat is dying; Minabell's battles with the Prairie Pirates from Chicago are assisted, and considerably brightened, by Gaylord Cardinal, Secret Agent Wendell Weasel, Teena Chipmunk, and of course brave Aunt Pitty Pat herself; a pleasant spoof of commando-style takeovers in current fiction, employing all the terrorist tactics, but gently, humorously, and to a good end; fine pen-and-ink drawings; for animal lovers with a sense of humor

Landon, Lucinda. MEG MACKINTOSH AND THE MYSTERY AT THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE. (Solve-It-Yourself Mystery Books) 52 p. $12.45. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-51363-6) Grades 3-5

Another solve-it-yourself mystery featuring sleuth Meg Mackintosh, this time tracking the thief who has stolen a priceless silver chalice from an authentic medieval castle; as Meg narrows down the list of suspects, the reader, as usual, is invited to share in the detective work by big-lettered questions posed at the end of each turn in plot, always signaled by Meg's brainstorms; Meg's class, detained by police officers because they were present at the scene of the crime, participate happily if nervously in the interrogation; many black-and-white drawings as well as good information on daily life in a medieval castle

Le Guin, Ursula K. CATWINGS RETURN. 48 p. $10.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08403-5) Grades 1-4

Graceful sequel to the earlier Catwings featuring a family of tabbies who have wings and fly about, exhibiting otherwise all the usual cat behavior and personality; in this follow-up, James and Harriet seek out their mother, the ladylike Mrs. Jane Tabby, who has removed to a penthouse garden roof in the city after having seen her brood safely off to the country in the initial story; the exciting, long flight to the city involves rescuing a kitten and evading men and machines demolishing the cats' old home in the slums; lovely, detailed pen-and-ink drawings softly washed in color create a second dimension to the saga of the cats, greatly enhancing the story; children will love the new kitten, black and winged--"Her father was Mr. Tom Jones. You remember him, I'm sure," Mrs. Jane Tabby informs her older children as she thanks them for rescuing their newest sibling; small format invites small hands

Levinson, Marilyn. THE FOURTH-GRADE FOUR. 57 p. $12.95. H. Holt & Co., 1989. (ISBN 0-8050-1082-3) Grades 3-6

Fourth grader Alex, a natural athlete and "all-boy" sort, and his coming to grips with a need for glasses to alleviate myopia; as Alex faces up to his problem, he also realizes that his pal, Billy, is a bully whose name-calling--"Lard Body," "Four Eyes," and such, for other kids who aren't

so physically perfect as Billy--compensates for Billy's own "flaw" of having failed first grade; examines Alex's fears of losing his place on team sports, of being jeered by Billy, of standing out for his difference, forthrightly and sympathetically; accurate description of Alex's growing difficulty with seeing at a distance; comforting but never soppy reading for young children who must wear glasses; unusually good black-and-white drawings capture Alex's skewed perspective with great gentleness

Levy, Elizabeth. THE CASE OF THE GOBBLING SQUASH. (Magic Mystery Series) 49 p. $10.95. S&S, 1988. (ISBN 0-671-63655-3) Grades 2-5

Magic tricks galore for boys and girls who yearn to be magicians in this slight story of Max and Kate who enliven their school Thanksgiving pageant with disappearing bunnies, a remote-control squash, and a pink sock ghost; black-and-white drawings capture the atmosphere of mystery and surprise; four tricks from Max's magic kit are fully explained at the end

Levy, Elizabeth. THE CASE OF THE MIND-READING MOMMIES. (Magic Mystery Series) 53 p. $10.95. S&S, 1989. (ISBN 0-671-63656-1) Grades 2-5

More magic from Kate and Max whose motto is "Mysteries solved: no job too small, too big or too weird"; in this one, the two magicians do a special Mother's Day show in which Kate appears to snip up her long-suffering mother's favorite pearl necklace, only to reveal that the scattered pearls are impressive imitations--in fact, her Mother's Day gift which will allow her mom to wear her treasured, if fake-version, necklace much more often; sibling rivalry and parent-child conflict underlie plot; large, softly shaded black-and-white drawings

Lisle, Janet Taylor. AFTERNOON OF THE ELVES. 122 p. $12.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08437-X) Grades 4-7

Haunting story of Sara-Kate Connolly and her elf village, clearly her escape world from harsh realities of her own impoverished, desperate existence in midst of suburbia and middle-class ridicule; persuasively traces Sara-Kate's hypnotic influence on Hillary, her nine-year-old neighbor whose comfortable life has not sterilized her imagination or soured her sympathy for the outcast, elfin girl whose obsessive secrecy and insistence that mythical creatures inhabit her backyard seems borne out by magical appearance of miniature houses, diminutive ferris wheels, other "evidence" of elf habitation; realistic portrayal of manipulative relationships and imaginative compensation, all sympathetically rendered (NOTE: a 1990 Newbery Honor Book)

Lowry, Lois. NUMBER THE STARS. 137 p. $12.95. Houghton, 1989. (ISBN 0-395-51060-0) Grades 4-7

Satisfying drama of Danish Resistance in World War II, centering on Annemarie Johansen's family's successful concealment of their Jewish friends, the Rosens, as Nazis begin arresting Danish Jews; told through eyes of young Annemarie, story conveys courage and deprivation of occupied Copenhagen; devotion of Annemarie to her Jewish friend, Ellen Rosen, and heroic behavior of Annemarie's mother and uncle form core of stark, compelling narrative inspired by fact; clean, uncluttered writing captures beauty and simplicity of Danish daily life in city and on farm as Johansens smuggle Rosens from

their Copenhagen apartment to Uncle Henrik's seaside home where the Ingeborg, his fishing boat, will spirit them across to Sweden; a finely wrought tale, moving and unburdened by polemics (NOTE: 1990 Newbery Award Book)

McNair, Joseph. COMMANDER COATRACK RETURNS. 188 p. $13.95. Houghton, 1989. (ISBN 0-395-48295-X) Grades 5-9

Thirteen-year-old Lisa, the narrator of this engaging book, has helped look after her five-year-old brother, Cody, for most of his life; Cody has physical and mental limitations, and his parents--because of guilt and distress--have not been able to cope well with his situation; Lisa and Cody have become especially close, and Lisa has created elaborate fantasies to entertain her brother (hence Cody's role as Commander Coatrack); when her parents seek professional help and devote more time to Cody, Lisa feels left out; she also feels unneeded because Cody starts going to a special school; at loose ends, Lisa makes a new friend at school, Robert Wormer, who switches personae whenever he gets into a difficult or uncomfortable situation; Lisa, already used to imaginative games with Cody, falls into this role-playing with ease but abruptly stops when it gets her into trouble at school; Robert, unfortunately, cannot stop, and Lisa is unable to reach through the fantasies to the real Robert; at home Lisa tries to resurrect the Commander Coatrack games with Cody, but he has made progress at school and moved beyond Commander Coatrack; Lisa and her mother are finally able to talk out the problems the family has had and the resentment Lisa feels at the changes in Cody's life--and therefore hers; a sensitive book about the perennial human tendency to escape into denial or fantasy rather than solidly face reality; through Lisa the author shows that reality can be not only manageable but agreeable; an appealing, funny, and insightful addition to library collections

Maguire, Gregory. I FEEL LIKE THE MORNING STAR. 275 p. $14.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-024022-9) Grades 8-12

Absorbing futuristic tale of routine and rebellion in Pioneer Colony, an underground survival community; for five years after a nuclear disaster inhabitants have lived in superorganized compounds governed by a tightly regimented Council of Elders under the assumption that the colony's exit tunnels have collapsed; three teenagers become increasingly restless as they remember the life above ground; Ella, a musician in charge of the nursery, wants a brighter future for her charges; Mart, the daring mischief-maker who adores her, tinkers skillfully with computers and machines; Sorb, an intelligent boy with strong convictions, becomes driven by a mysterious call to freedom; with help and information from a once politically active singer known as "The Morning Star," the trio makes a daring escape; young characters display friendship, commitment, and courage in a world that is safe but sterile; will appeal to general readers as well as to science fiction buffs

Manes, Stephen. MONSTRA VS. IRVING. 74 p. $12.95. H. Holt & Co., 1989. (ISBN 0-8050-0836-5) Grades 2-5

So ridiculous that it's irresistible--Irving orders Monster-Ade from a source in Transylvania (!), Kentucky, to turn himself into a monster and thereby have half a fighting chance against his "monster" little sister Claire, only to have his magic, mail-order potion stolen and swallowed by Claire, who immediately turns into a real monster; readers will laugh out loud as Irving,

Mr. and Mrs. Shapiro, and "Monstra" cavort desperately about, the Shapiros trying to restrain Monstra and Monstra, as usual, getting the best of everybody; Irving's trials and tribulations with his little sister are so hilariously exaggerated that, when the antidote finally arrives express from Transylvania, we are all sorry; far-out black-and-white drawings depict a small fiend and an embattled big brother in every imaginable zany dilemma

Mazer, Norma Fox and Harry. HEARTBEAT. 165 p. $13.95. Bantam, 1989. (ISBN 0-553-05808-8) Grades 9-12

Teenage love triangle with some serious twists; smart and attractive Tod Ellerbee should coast through senior year, but inside he wrestles with feelings of uncertainty about his goals, his elusive relationship with his father, and vague memories of his mother, who died when he was three; his best friend, Amos Vaccaro, is witty, energetic, and cheerful; their ties run deep and strong because Amos saved Tod's life five years earlier; Amos wants his friend to introduce him to Hilary, a girl he worships from afar; Tod and Hilary, an accomplished auto mechanic disappointing her family with her lack of college plans, are attracted to each other; Hilary dates and enjoys Amos but focuses on her relationship with Tod, who avoids discussing the turn of events with his friend; the silent understanding of Amos keeps the friendship intact; when Amos is hospitalized for an incurable heart ailment, Tod and Hilary make a difficult decision, acting selflessly when the stakes are high; believable characters coping honestly with feelings, changes, and loss give this novel wide appeal

Michels, Tilde. RABBIT SPRING. Translated from the German by J. Allison James. 84 p. $11.95. Harcourt, 1988. (ISBN 0-15-200568-4) Grades 2-4

Lovely, informative story of a rabbit family and a hare family, illustrated in detailed, woodcut-like, pen-and-ink drawings that show the life cycle and distinctions of both species; text and pictures depict each family in its different habitat, at play, while foraging and feeding, and fleeing its predators--owls, foxes, dogs, hunters; packed with facts distinguishing the rabbit from the hare, but presented anthropomorphically--Rahm and Silla Rabbit are "husband" and "wife," sort of, whereas the hare mother of Brown-Ears and Gray-Ears is a "single parent"; engaging lesson, charmingly written (translated from German) and most compatibly illustrated

Murrow, Liza Ketchum. FIRE IN THE HEART. 255 p. $14.95. Holiday, 1989. (ISBN 0-8234-0750-0) Grades 6-9

Fourteen-year-old Molly O'Connor becomes curious about her dead mother after accidentally reading a letter to her father concerning her mother; her father does not want to discuss Molly's mother or the accident that took her life ten years earlier; but Molly is determined to unravel the mystery of her mother's character and of her death and does so with the help of her grandmother, her stepmother, an eccentric cousin, and a teenaged correspondent in California, where her mother died; Molly becomes convinced that her mother was searching for gold buried in California by an ancestor; she and her stepmother travel there, and with the help of Ramon she finds the buried treasure; many old wounds are healed in the process of chasing the

strands of a dead woman's life--Molly is finally able to come to grips with her suppressed emotions and accept her stepmother, her father lets go of a damaging misconception about his late wife's activities, and her grandmother and cousin end a longstanding feud; a story with adventure and heart, one that emphasizes the alienating effect of secrets and misunderstandings and the healing power of truth

Nabb, Magdalen. JOSIE SMITH. 72 p. $12.95. McElderry Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-689-50485-3) Grades 2-3

The misadventures of independent-minded Josie Smith, who lives alone with her mother; each of the three chapters relates what is for Josie a minor catastrophe: she fails to earn enough money for her mother's birthday present, she spills blackboard paint and runs away, and she has to give an adopted cat back to its owners; each time her mother's warmth and steadiness as well as the goodness of other people make the situation right; appealing black-and-white drawings by Pirkko Vainio enliven the text; young readers will like the character of Josie and respond empathetically to her crises; humorous touches such as Josie's shutting her eyes every time she tells a lie will also delight children; a good choice for young readers becoming acquainted with chapter books

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. ALICE IN RAPTURE, SORT OF. 166 p. $12.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31466-3) Grades 5-8

The summer between sixth and seventh grade finds Alice in love, sort of; she and her friends Elizabeth and Pamela have been told that they will never have a boyfriend in high school if they don't start junior high with one, so the matter of being part of a couple becomes of utmost importance to all three; Alice and her good friend Patrick venture into the unknown territory of being girlfriend and boyfriend and do a lot of kissing over the summer; Alice, whose mother has been dead for several years, struggles to learn the unwritten rules of appropriate behavior with members of the opposite sex and in her guileless and rather hilarious way attempts to make sense of them; by the end of the summer Elizabeth and Pamela have lost their boyfriends, and Alice decides that she would be more comfortable being friends with Patrick instead of having a romance with him; a delightful and funny book that implies that being in love can wait for the right time and doesn't have to happen in the seventh grade

Newth, Mette. THE ABDUCTION. Translated from the Norwegian by Tiina Nunnally and Steve Murray. 247 p. $13.95. Farrar, 1989. (ISBN 0-374-30008-9) Grades 8-12

Riveting fact-based historical novel about Inuit Eskimos stolen from their families in Greenland by seventeenth-century European merchants; Osuqo, her future husband Poq, and her father are brutally kidnapped; Osuqo endures her father's murder and rape by sailors (clearly described but not in contemporary graphic detail); when the ship docks in Norway, the two captives are guarded by servant girl Christine, whose father died aboard the ship; reveals culture clash on the human level with chapters that alternate between the point of view of Osuqo (reflecting the traditions and natural unity of the Eskimo world) and that of Christine (showing the greed and intolerance of "civilization"); bereft of their "thoughts, gods, and past," the Eskimos are

displayed as curiosities, suspected of witchcraft, and converted forcefully to Christianity; Christine and a merchant's sensitive son respect the unfortunate pair and plot their escape; finally, Osuqo and Poq embark on their bridal procession in a kayak headed for the open sea; complex, haunting novel with strong and admirable young characters encourages social sensitivity and points to cruelties often involved when one culture imposes itself on another; highly recommended

O'Connor, Jim and Jane. THE GHOST IN TENT 19. 62 p. $5.99. Random Sch. Div., 1988. (ISBN 0-394-99800-6) Grades 2-5

A routine, boys' camp summer at Camp Tall Pines suddenly leaps to life, thanks to, of all things, a ghost; narrated by Danny, this story of camp life--the nerdy but nice counselor, the poison ivy plague, the vicious Maine country gnats, and the inevitable whiny kid who hates every activity--turns into a pleasant little foray into pirate's buried treasure and insight into a restless ghost, whose final peace is assisted by Danny, Jed, Arthur, and Hal; suitably ghostly drawings; combination of wise kid dialogue and the supernatural is witty and self-mocking

O'Dell, Scott. MY NAME IS NOT ANGELICA. 130 p. $14.95. Houghton, 1989. (ISBN 0-395-51061-9) Grades 5-8

Beautifully written story of 16-year-old Raisha, kidnapped and sold by slave traders to plantation owner Jost Van Prok on St. John's Island where she is made a body servant to Jenna, mistress of Hawk's Nest and wife of Jost; based on the great slave revolt of 1733, story follows Raisha--renamed Angelica--through her harrowing escape from Van Proks, loss of her beloved mate, and selfless refusal to give up her life in prideful showdown between runaway slaves and enemy; hypnotic opening chapters mirror native paradise poisoned by treacherous blacks' cooperation with slave traders; lovely, limpid voice of Raisha recounts her story in unforgettable images; excellent content on little known aspects of African village life and customs, horrors of slave ships, "breaking in" of newly arrived slaves by plantation staff; excellent historical fiction

Paulsen, Gary. THE VOYAGE OF THE FROG. 141 p. $12.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08405-1) Grades 6-9

Just as young David Alspeth finishes the eighth grade, his beloved Uncle Owen dies of cancer; Owen leaves his sailboat to David and asks him to scatter his ashes in the ocean beyond the sight of land; thinking that his trip will be a short, uneventful one, David does not adequately check either the weather or his supplies of food and water; an unexpected storm pushes him far from home, and David has some frightening experiences (e.g., a near collision with an oil tanker and an encounter with a shark) before he meets up with another ship; he decides to accept new provisions and sail back home rather than return on the ship and leave his boat behind; in the course of his trip, David has made a deep connection with the boat, a connection that helps him begin to make peace with his uncle's death; a coming-of-age adventure filled with vivid description and fascinating details about sailing; contains a black-and-white diagram of the boat and a map of David's voyage; an exciting book for all lovers of adventure and sailing and for anyone who enjoys a good read

Paulsen, Gary. THE WINTER ROOM. 103 p. $11.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08439-6) Grades 6-9

A gentle story told by eleven-year-old Eldon, who lives with his older brother Wayne, his parents, Uncle David, and Nels, an old man like Uncle David; Eldon lyrically explores the four seasons of the year in Minnesota, giving each one sound, touch, taste, and smell so that readers join him in the physical and emotional experience of each season; we learn what happens on the farm in each season and discover the tender heart of Eldon, who cannot bear the death that accompanies fall on the farm; Uncle David's stories end the book, stories told in the winter room where the family gathers around the stove in the cold of that season; these stories help the young brothers learn that truth can be found outside facts and that one must look deep to find the true identity of another; a beautifully written book with description that transports the reader to a Minnesota farm and into a poetic experience of human sense and feeling (NOTE: a 1990 Newbery Honor Book)

Peck, Richard. VOICES AFTER MIDNIGHT. 181 p. $14.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29779-3) Grades 7-10

Fantasy fans will enjoy this time travel adventure; fourteen-year-old Chad, his older sister Heidi, and his eight-year-old brother Luke travel from their home in California to spend two weeks in New York City, where their father has business; there they live in an old house where the children hear voices after midnight that call them back to the past, to late 1887 and early 1888, on a mission that will change history in a way they cannot foresee; although the plot seems somewhat contrived at times, excitement and suspense abound as the brothers enter the past more and more and finally discover their sister's role in the adventure; includes some wonderful description of New York a hundred years ago; characters are engaging and well drawn, and young readers will appreciate the topical references; a fun read

Pevsner, Stella. HOW COULD YOU DO IT, DIANE? 183 p. $13.95. Clarion Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-395-51041-4) Grades 8-12

Fourteen-year-old Bethany struggles to come to terms with the suicide of her stepsister Diane; first-person account describes the early days of guilt, anger, and wavering between an acceptance of her sister's decision to "drop out of life" and a flickering suspicion that she never really meant to kill herself; delineates a variety of responses to the tragedy: parents' initial numbness and avoidance, a grandmother's comforting influence, a quiet younger brother's outbursts in school, a six-year-old sister's attempts to imitate her dead sister, and friends' inadvertent blunders; emotional reactions, vivid memories, and the secret knowledge of earlier suicide gestures intensify the effect; a caring therapist helps the family reach a promising equilibrium; Bethany gradually realizes that she will never fully understand this terrible event and is able to affirm her own choice to live and grow; a credible account of a family in crisis that does not sensationalize suicide but brings this irrevocable and often inexplicable action close to home because Diane is a popular, occasionally depressed teenager with a flair for the dramatic and a youthful wish to have her way; appropriate for general leisure reading and for students who have experienced the death of a family member or close friend

Reading, J.P. THE SUMMER OF SASSY JO. 182 p. $13.95. Houghton, 1989. (ISBN 0-395-48950-4) Grades 6-9

Sara Jo Jacoby, the first-person narrator of this novel, has just finished junior high school; she has been living with her aunt, a prickly woman who can barely tolerate the adolescent and angry Sara, since her father died; now she is spending the summer with her mother, a recovering alcoholic who abandoned Sara when she was five; her mother has remarried and has a toddler, Lily; during the summer Sara must face many of her deepest sorrows, including the question of whether she will ever be able to trust her mother again; along the way she makes her first really solid friendship and discovers love with a boy named L.T.; realistically portrays the rocky road to rebuilding a relationship as well as the suffering caused by the disease of alcoholism; also presents the ideas that people suffer consequences for their actions and must take responsibility for them and that people can and do change; a well-written book that provides no easy answers but offers the hope that caring, respect, and responsibility can effect deep changes in a person's life and allow one to overcome pain and loss in a constructive way; a fine novel that encourages empathy and self-esteem

Rostkowski, Margaret I. THE BEST OF FRIENDS. 183 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-025105-0) Grades 7-12

A serious book about conflicts among friends and family, specifically those that developed as a result of the Vietnam War; Dan and Sarah, brother and sister, and Will, their friend, have been close for years; Dan and Sarah struggle against an authoritarian father with conservative political views; Will has his own struggle with Dan's attempts to control his life; Dan is very intelligent and a true achiever but never quite good enough for his father; Dan is intellectually opposed to the war, but unlike Sarah, who campaigns against the war because of her outrage at the waste of human life, he takes no action on his beliefs; Will does not share their feelings about the war and enlists in the military as soon as he finishes his senior year of high school because he lacks the academic credentials and ability to finish college; complicating the situation is Will and Sarah's growing attraction to one another; at first Sarah is angry at Will for his willingness to be a part of the war but comes to explain to herself and her brother that Will's decision must be respected; Dan, whose father is chairman of the local draft board, finally takes his own action by tearing up his draft card and giving it to his father; although this story takes place in 1969, the human conflicts and feelings dealt with are universal and timeless; each of the three young people learns much about friendship, independence in relationships, and following one's own path; provides very little historical detail but instead reveals the flavor of the era through characters and relationships; good reading for those wanting to know more about the sixties and for those involved in difficult relationships (almost everyone, of course)

Sacks, Margaret. BEYOND SAFE BOUNDARIES. 156 p. $13.95. Lodestar Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-525-67281-8) Grades 6-10

South Africa of the 1950s and early 1960s is the setting of this first-person narrative; between the ages of eleven and fifteen, Elizabeth Levin grows from a child delighted to have a new stepmother (she cannot remember her biological mother) to a young woman aware of the injustice and inhumanity of

apartheid; her older sister, Evie, does not easily accept her stepmother, but the harder family problems start when Evie goes away to college and becomes part of the antiapartheid movement; Evie's boyfriend is arrested and murdered, and she is placed under house arrest; eventually her more conservative but resourceful stepmother arranges for Evie to flee to England; Elizabeth, who has been essentially an observer of the political goings-on, now becomes determined to make a difference in her own way; strong, sympathetic characterizations and an interesting plot help blend personal stories and political indignation into a fine novel that not only makes the point that political and human injustice ultimately affects all of us but also shows the many ways in which love can grow and reveal itself in human relationships; an excellent choice for fiction collections

Sachs, Betsy. THE BOY WHO ATE DOG BISCUITS. 63 p. $5.99. Random Sch. Div., 1989. (ISBN 0-394-94778-9) Grades 2-4

All about Billy who wants a dog so badly that he even nibbles dog biscuits (the chicken-with-cheese flavored ones aren't bad); poor Billy gets a baby sister instead of a dog, but his grandfather visits, discovers Billy's smart side--Billy helps Dr. Mike, the veterinarian, by running the dogs, feeding them, and generally being available to help out with all the animals--and convinces Mom and Dad that Billy has "earned" himself a dog; funny pen-and-ink drawings in black and white capture Billy's romps with veterinary animals and his glum babysitting time with little Sarah; nice introduction to concept of responsibility

Sachs, Marilyn. MATT'S MITT & FLEET-FOOTED FLORENCE. 39 p. $11.95. Dutton, 1989. (ISBN 0-525-44450-5) Grades 2-5

Two droll and engaging tall tales for baseball fans in a text just right for read-aloud; Matt's magic mitt makes him the greatest outfielder in baseball history, never letting him miss a ball, and Florence, daughter of Matt, is the fastest runner, rounding all bases with such speed that opposing teams just give up at the sight of her; a wonderful tall-tale voice, both mock-serious and teasing while recounting the splendid feats of these two epic players; the fact that Matt marries a lady umpire and Florence marries Fabulous Frankie, the amazing Yankee catcher, is a nice touch; alliterative, figurative language, lyrical and begging to be read aloud; action drawings in soft pen and ink

Sandburg, Carl. ROOTABAGA STORIES: PART TWO. 179 p. $19.95. Harcourt, 1989. (ISBN 0-15-269062-X) Grades 3-6

Nonsense tales by Carl Sandburg in oversized format beautifully illustrated by Michael Hague in rich, darkly colored, full-page pictures within wide borders; Sandburg's engaging silliness about the Huckabuck family, Johnny the Wham, Joe the Wimp, the Ax Me No Questions girl, and others is fully captured in Hague's illustrations of odd people, strange but beguiling landscapes, animals in all sorts of appealing dilemmas, and particularly in the fascinating details of each illustration; a fine selection to trigger young imaginations, both verbally and visually; excellent read-aloud for K-2 grades; a handsome lure for display shelves as well

Service, Pamela F. VISION QUEST. 136 p. $12.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31498-1) Grades 7-9

Kate Elliot's father has died in the Middle East, and she and her mother have moved to a small town in Nevada to live with her mother's uncle; even though Kate has longed all her life for a real home--her family moved from one military base to another--this lonely, dry country is not what she had in mind; her emotional state is a reflection of her surroundings: she is determined not to get close to anyone else or to be involved with people at all; when she finds a charm stone that belonged to an Indian shaman of long ago, however, she finds herself entering his world more and more through dreams and visions; she reluctantly enlists the aid of her classmate Jimmy Fong, an amateur archaeologist, in interpreting the mystery of the stone and bringing peace to the spirits of two Indians; much excitement ensues at the end, including a motorcycle chase that spans two time periods and life-threatening danger from a pot hunter who sells marijuana; ultimately Kate finds some peace of her own in the idea of life as a continual flow; she can imagine that somewhere in that flow her father still lives with his wife and child just as her shaman's world still exists in its own space; the last words the shaman speaks to her bring to completion the last message her father wrote to her; now the past is gently finished, and Kate can begin again in the now; a well-written, well-constructed book that will hold readers' interest from beginning to end

Sevela, Ephraim. WE WERE NOT LIKE OTHER PEOPLE. Translated from the Russian by Antonina W. Bouis. 216 p. $13.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-025508-0) Grades 7-12

A Russian boy's quest for survival during World War II; when he is nine, his father, an officer in the Red Army, is taken away during the Stalinist purges; at twelve he is separated from his mother and sister; he experiences mistreatment and near starvation but also happens across people who are kind and helpful, such as the boy's former teacher and his wife, a peasant woman and her daughters, and a fellow soldier; these respites from aloneness always end, but the boy is a survivor, largely, we are encouraged to believe, because of his mother's insistence that he stand up and fight his own battles; at the end of the war, he is amazingly reunited with his mother, sister, aunt, and father; although the boy feels ambivalent about his Jewishness (he has been brought up not to believe in God), the novel does not provide any resolution to that issue; partially because of its episodic arrangement and partially because of the unemotional way in which the often revolting facts are presented, the book never sinks into melodrama in spite of its subject matter; the ultimate effect on the reader is a swift punch in the stomach followed by fear or vulnerability and then a certain hardness of feeling--essentially that same journey of emotion made over and over again by the narrator; a book of historical interest with appeal for those who like adventure, chronicles of survival, or war stories

Sieruta, Peter D. HEARTBEATS AND OTHER STORIES. 216 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-025849-7) Grades 7-12

A collection of nine excellent stories that reflect some literal and figurative heartbeats of teenage life; young people will recognize themselves or their friends in many of the situations and feelings: Emery loses the girl he adores to his older brother, Mitch finally gets his own room when his

older sister goes off to college, Paul feels trapped in a once vital relationship that has grown tired, Sid grieves over the girlfriend that moved away, a popular high school student is persecuted by a new teacher, a talented athlete gives up her chance to win a race when she runs the track pushing the wheelchair of a disabled classmate, David learns how merciless teasing can hurt, Henry faces his rage over parental neglect, and a young man who takes all remedial classes in high school discovers his own worth by learning how not to run away from unpleasant situations; in each story there is believable growth and learning; throughout the collection one feels the heartbeats of the search for meaning, the quest for self-fulfillment, and the longing to reach beyond seeming limitations; one also sees, in ways that are neither maudlin or false, the human ability to achieve insight about the self and the power that understanding brings; well-crafted, well-written, touching, and entertaining stories

Skurzynski, Gloria. DANGEROUS GROUND. 152 p. $12.95. Bradbury Pr., 1989. (ISBN 0-02-782731-3) Grades 5-8

Thoroughly engrossing story of 12-year-old Angela's complex relationship with her 78-year-old Great-aunt Hilda with whom she is living in Wyoming during the school year while her parents, itinerant oil drillers, resettle in Texas; Angela, who feels bitter and unloved by her immediate family, shields all her tender emotions, most of all her deep affection for "Ant Hil," who cooperates with the same sort of gruff, emotionally buried exterior; how the two finally admit their love and need for each other depends on a confrontation with a grizzly bear in the Wyoming wild as Ant Hil risks her own life to save her beloved great-niece; problems of two generations mesh and resolve in credible plot and lovable characters; excellent selection for sensitizing this age group to older generation and to the need of younger generations for experience, patience, and love of their elders

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. JANIE'S PRIVATE EYES. 212 p. $14.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-440-50123-7) Grades 4-6

Eight-year-old Janie Stanley forms her own detective agency and sets her mind to discovering who has been stealing dogs in Steven's Corners; with much help from her older brother, Janie and her younger brother and sister work to clear the name of the Tran family, their Vietnamese friends who have been falsely suspected of taking the dogs; after various escapades in the name of detective work, the Stanleys face real trouble when their own dog, Nightmare, is taken; although Janie wants all the credit for her brilliant detecting, it is actually Blair, one of the six-year-old twins, who locates Nightmare and the dognappers by using his psychic ability; the subtheme of prejudice against refugees is deftly worked into this funny mystery novel whose appealing characters and humorous situations will keep children reading

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. SHABANU: DAUGHTER OF THE WIND. 240 p. $13.99. Knopf, 1989. (ISBN 0-394-94815-7) Grades 7-12

Lovely, quietly intense story of a young Pakistani girl of the desert, Shabanu, 12-year-old daughter of a camel breeder and seller, whose nomadic life is beautifully evoked in details of the region, the culture, and the people themselves that testify to the author's thorough knowledge of her subject; full of drama and suspense as Shubanu travels with her father to the

great fair at Sibi where her beloved Guluband, a dancing camel, is sold over her bitter protests and her sister's dowry is collected at bazaars selling beautiful shawls and magnificent gold jewelry; encounters with hostile Arabs, assaults of nature through drought and wind storms, and the continuing drama of Shabanu herself, who is pledged to marry at thirteen and leave her beloved desert and camels, make absorbing reading; lyrical, pure style is direct and compelling; a gripping, completely accessible account of life among the simple people of the Cholistan Desert in Pakistan; excellent selection for correlation with any study of Mideast (NOTE: a 1990 Newbery Honor Book)

Thesman, Jean. APPOINTMENT WITH A STRANGER. 166 p. $13.95. Houghton, 1989. (ISBN 0-395-49215-7) Grades 6-9

Interesting ghost story involving teenaged asthmatic's encounter with restless spirit of boy drowned forty years earlier in same pond from which he rescues Keller Parrish as asthma attack threatens her solitary swim; full of clues as to Tom's real identity--drowning victim of unseen beaver traps sunk in pond by villainous animal hater--which Keller, lonely and isolated by her embarrassing illness, fails to detect; gripping fare for fans of psychic phenomena which mixes plausible and mysterious in balanced blend; delightful characters in Keller's grandmother and her persistent young wooer, Drew Sennet, keep the ghostly, unreal quality of main plot from becoming ludicrous; sympathetic insight into problems of severely asthmatic youth

Trease, Geoffrey. A FLIGHT OF ANGELS. 115 p. $9.95. Lerner Pubns., 1989. (ISBN 0-8225-0731-5) Grades 5-9

A well-written, intelligent story of mystery and adventure in the medieval cave cellars of Nottingham, England, which exist today underneath the city; Sheila, an English schoolgirl whose father works for a wine merchant in the old part of the city, decides to do her research paper on the underground cellar at Peblow's; when Sheila and her friends discover a concealed archway, excitement increases as the young people involve the local librarian, Sheila's father, and the Peblow family in their unearthing of magnificient alabaster panels once adorning the altar of an ancient church which stood on the wine shop's premises during the reign of Edward VI; excellent information on research techniques and--really unusual--the role of a librarian in assisting research are huge pluses, both of which aids are smoothly, unobtrusively integrated into an exciting plot with well-drawn characters; good fiction and good documentary skills in one title

Turner, Ann. GRASSHOPPER SUMMER. 166 p. $13.95. Macmillan, 1989. (ISBN 0-02-789511-4) Grades 4-8

One of those compelling sagas of pioneering, here featuring a restless, hardworking father, a strong, dedicated mother, and children who hate to leave familiar surroundings--Kentucky--for the difficult, desperate life of wresting a livelihood out of Dakota Territory in 1874; narrated by 11-year-old Sam White, the drama of removal, leaving behind all that is dear and familiar, and facing westward is not the exciting fun conjured up by today's Western movie fare; all the family's hard work is destroyed by a plague of grasshoppers (superbly and eerily described), an event which, ironically, serves to reveal to Sam and his whole family how sound and solid their ties have become through their long journey, its adversities, and their

disagreements and misunderstandings from time to time; well-written, substantial, with the kind of ending that makes readers look for more, a sequel perhaps; fans of Laura Ingalls Wilder will rejoice in this similar evocation of frontier life

Van de Wetering, Janwillem. HUGH PINE AND SOMETHING ELSE. 72 p. $12.95. Houghton, 1989. (ISBN 0-395-49216-5) Grades 2-3

"Vacation is Something Else," sighs Mr. McTosh to his porcupine friend, Hugh, in this whimsical little adventure of Hugh Pine into the hustle and bustle of metropolitan living via a vacation with his human friend, Mr. McTosh, at his sister's Brooklyn home; Hugh's encounters with Emily McTosh's dog, cat, and parrot contain all the fun, tumble, and I-dare-you mischief of real children's visits to distant relatives, including a clever solution to the problem with Bully, a neighborhood dog who lives up to his name; Hugh's appetite for toothpicks and wooden spoons at fast-food restaurants and his spiny head and tail crammed into droopy coat and oversized hat provide content for droll pen-and-ink illustrations showing Hugh and the McToshes living comfortably together

Voigt, Cynthia. SEVENTEEN AGAINST THE DEALER. 181 p. $13.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31497-3) Grades 8-12

The final book about the Tillerman family; Dicey is twenty-one and determined to make a success of her boatbuilding business; with a singleness of mind that causes her to ignore her boyfriend and the needs of her family, Dicey carefully plans each move towards her goal, wanting always to maintain control over her destiny with no help from anyone; she makes serious and costly business mistakes because of her stubborn independence and her unacknowledged ignorance of how to run a business; when a drifter named Cisco begins coming in to help Dicey day after day, even though she has no money to hire him, she enjoys his company, his talk, and his work; Dicey comes to trust Cisco, but he steals a large sum of money from her, making it impossible for Dicey to keep her shop open; after Dicey's grandmother becomes ill and she thinks she has lost Jeff, she finally learns that family, relationships, and continued learning are more vital than achieving a single goal and that with compromise and open-mindedness one can have some of both; an interesting exploration of a young mind that has not learned to open itself to knowledge and wisdom that already exist instead of moving blindly forward in a tunnel of self-sufficiency; well-drawn characters that readers can care about, an absorbing plot, and good writing make this novel a first choice for serious readers

York, Carol Beach. ONCE UPON A DARK NOVEMBER. 98 p. $12.95. Holiday, 1989. (ISBN 0-8234-0780-2) Grades 5-8

Gently modulated tale of suspense and terror centering on high school freshman Katie Allen's infatuation with her English teacher, a crush which eventually entangles her in a murder right in her own quiet neighborhood; when Miss Gorley, a sinister old woman who lives across the street from Katie in a large, spooky house, is found strangled, Katie feels in her bones that her English teacher's strange, silent cousin, in town for a visit, is responsible--before realizing that the mustachioed, thick-spectacled "cousin" might just be her much admired English teacher himself; a spare, quietly drawn mystery with all the cozily chilling components essential to the budding detective story fan

BOOKS REVIEWED IN OTHER SOURCES

The books listed below have received favorable reviewes in one or more of the following reviewing sources. Code letters for the reviewing sources are cited after the bibliographic entry for each title. The reviewing sources and their code letters are as follows:

BOOK WORLD	BW
BOOKLIST	BKL
BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS	BCCB
HORN BOOK	HB
KIRKUS REVIEWS	KR
NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW	NYTBR
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY	PW
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL	SLJ
VOICE OF YOUTH ADVOCATES	VOYA
WILSON LIBRARY BULLETIN	WLB

An asterisk after the code letters for the reviewing source indicates that the title was highly recommended in that particular reviewing source.

Aiken, Joan. THE LAST SLICE OF RAINBOW AND OTHER STORIES. 144 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1988. (ISBN 0-06-020043-X) Grades 3-6. BCCB BKL BW KR SLJ

Amoss, Berthe. THE MOCKINGBIRD SONG. 123 p. $12.89. Har-Row, 1988. (ISBN 0-06-020062-6) Grades 4-7. BCCB BKL KR PW SLJ

Anderson, Margaret J. THE DRUID'S GIFT. 211 p. $13.99. Knopf, 1989. (ISBN 0-394-91936-X) Grades 5-10. BCCB BKL HB KR PW SLJ

Asimov, Janet and Isaac. NORBY DOWN TO EARTH. 107 p. $13.85. Walker & Co., 1989. (ISBN 0-8027-6867-9) Grades 4-7. BKL SLJ VOYA

Avi. SOMETHING UPSTAIRS: A TALE OF GHOSTS. 120 p. $11.99. Orchard Bks., 1988. (ISBN 0-531-08382-9) Grades 5-9. BCCB BKL HB SLJ VOYA WLB

Bawden, Nina. HENRY. 119 p. $13. Lothrop, 1988. (ISBN 0-688-07894-X) Grades 3-7. BCCB BKL* HB KR* PW SLJ*

Betancourt, Jeanne. NOT JUST PARTY GIRLS. 165 p. $13.95. Bantam, 1989. (ISBN 0-553-05497-X) Grades 7-10. BKL KR PW SLJ VOYA

Blackwood, Gary L. THE DYING SUN. 213 p. $13.95. Atheneum, 1989. (ISBN 0-689-31482-5) Grades 7-12. BKL KR SLJ VOYA

Busselle, Rebecca. BATHING UGLY. 184 p. $12.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08401-9) Grades 6-9. BCCB BKL KR SLJ VOYA

Bylinsky, Tatyana. BEFORE THE WILDFLOWERS BLOOM. 70 p. $13.95. Crown, 1989. (ISBN 0-517-57052-1) Grades 3-6. BKL HB KR PW SLJ

Carris, Joan. HEDGEHOGS IN THE CLOSET. 186 p. $11.89. Lippincott, 1988. (ISBN 0-397-32234-8) Grades 5-9. BKL KR PW SLJ

Charnas, Suzy McKee. THE SILVER GLOVE. 162 p. $13.95. Bantam, 1988. (ISBN 0-553-05470-8) Grades 5-9. BCCB KR PW SLJ VOYA

Chetwin, Grace. THE STARSTONE. 240 p. $14.95. Bradbury Pr., 1989. (ISBN 0-02-718315-7) Grades 5-9. BKL BW HB KR PW SLJ VOYA

Christian, Mary Blount. SEBASTIAN (SUPER SLEUTH) AND THE TIME CAPSULE CAPER. 60 p. $10.95. Macmillan, 1989. (ISBN 0-02-718570-2) Grades 3-5. SLJ

Christopher, Matt. TACKLE WITHOUT A TEAM. 145 p. $12.45. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-14067-8) Grades 4-7. BKL KR SLJ

Cohen, Barbara. TELL US YOUR SECRET. 172 p. $13.95. Bantam, 1989. (ISBN 0-533-05810-X) Grades 7-10. BCCB BKL KR PW SLJ VOYA

Cooper, Ilene. QUEEN OF THE SIXTH GRADE. 163 p. $11.95. Morrow, 1988. (ISBN 0-688-07933-4) Grades 4-7. BCCB HB KR PW SLJ

Daneman, Meredith. FRANCIE AND THE BOYS. 181 p. $14.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-440-50137-7) Grades 7-9. BCCB BKL KR SLJ VOYA

DeClements, Barthe. FIVE-FINGER DISCOUNT. 131 p. $13.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29705-X) Grades 4-7. BCCB BKL HB KR PW SLJ

Denzel, Justin. BOY OF THE PAINTED CAVE. 158 p. $13.95. Philomel Bks., 1988. (ISBN 0-399-21559-X) Grades 4-8. BKL KR PW SLJ

Deuker, Carl. ON THE DEVIL'S COURT. 252 p. $13.45. Little, 1989. (ISBN 0-316-18147-1) Grades 8-12. BCCB BKL HB KR PW SLJ* VOYA

Dexter, Catherine. MAZEMAKER. 202 p. $11.95. Morrow, 1989. (ISBN 0-688-07383-2) Grades 5-9. BCCB BKL HB KR PW SLJ VOYA

Dickinson, Peter. MERLIN DREAMS. 167 p. $19.95. Delacorte, 1988. (ISBN 0-440-50067-2) Grades 6-12. BCCB BKL* BW HB KR* PW SLJ VOYA

Diggs, Lucy. MOON IN THE WATER. 234 p. $13.95. Atheneum, 1988. (ISBN 0-689-31337-3) Grades 6-10. BKL KR PW SLJ

Downing, Warwick. KID CURRY'S LAST RIDE. 166 p. $12.99. Orchard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-531-08402-7) Grades 6-9. BKL KR PW SLJ VOYA

Eisenberg, Lisa. MYSTERY AT BLUFF POINT DUNES. 150 p. $14.51. Dial Bks. Young, 1988. (ISBN 0-8037-0527-1) Grades 5-8. BCCB BKL SLJ

George, Jean Craighead. SHARK BENEATH THE REEF. 182 p. $11.89. Har-Row, 1989. (ISBN 0-06-021993-9) Grades 6-12. BCCB BKL BW KR* PW SLJ VOYA

Giff, Patricia Reilly. POOPSIE POMERANTZ, PICK UP YOUR FEET. 147 p. $13.95. Delacorte, 1989. (ISBN 0-385-29693-2) Grades 3-6. BKL HB PW SLJ

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